

The Scroll of Set

Issue Number 4

Volume I-4

December 1975

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[1] The Gods of Christmas

- by Margaret Wendall IV°

“In the latter days a pure virgin shall conceive, and when the child is born a star will appear. When you behold the star follow wheresoever it shall lead you and adore the child, offering gifts with humility. He is the Almighty Word which created the Heavens.” This prophesy came true on the Winter Solstice, December 25th by the Julian calendar. The god was called the “Unconquered Sun” and founded a religion based on aspirations of moral purity and the hope of immortality. He initiated several sacraments, among them baptism and the use of consecrated bread, wine and water. His worship included both communion and fasts; the leaders of his faith - both men and women - were celibate, and his priests were called, “Father”. He was regarded as the mediator between god and man, and he gave his life to ensure mankind’s future happiness.

Jesus? No - Mithra, the founder of a religion at least 600 years older than Christianity. Mithraism, which contains many elements borrowed by Christianity, was a very real threat to the early Christian Church Fathers, who called it a “work of the Devil” to seduce men from what Christians considered the “true faith”. Mithraism was forcefully suppressed in the Mediterranean regions by the time of Constantine.

He was born in a cave when his father went to the city to pay taxes. His birth was saluted by angels, and a light shone in the heavens. His parents were visited by a prophet who proclaimed the newborn child’s divine descent. His family fled to avoid persecution by a wicked king.

Jesus? No - Krishna, whose birthday is celebrated on the 25th day of Savarana, which corresponds to our December, and which is the Winter Solstice. Krishna’s life parallels Jesus’; in Hinduism he is regarded as an incarnation of god, and is called “He who takes away the sins of the world”. Millions of his followers still celebrate his birthday by decorating their homes and by the presentation of gifts to relatives and friends.

He was born of a virgin at the Winter Solstice. His birth was heralded by a star and singing angels. A wise man visited him at his birth and prophesied greatness. His followers call him the “Key of Righteousness”.

Jesus? No - the Buddha, whose life greatly parallels Jesus’ life. Today, many Buddhists not only celebrate the Buddha’s birthday, but their own, on January First, just eight days from the old Winter Solstice, and in Japanese Buddhism, “Bodhi Day” is December 8th. Both Buddhism and Christianity have “overcome” obstacles in their paths by absorbing them into their traditions, and today there are as many Buddhist sects as there are Christian denominations [although Buddhists of one sect treat others with a respect totally lacking in Christianity].

“Unto us a child is born this day!” In pre-Christian Rome this song was commonly heard on the Winter Solstice, December 25th, the birthday of the Sun. The festival was held during Saturnalia, and both were national festivals. All work stopped, and all roles were reversed. Master became slave and slave became master, a mock king who represented Saturn, god of sowing and husbandry, was elected.

In Egypt a Solar Nativity Ritual was celebrated on December 24th at midnight, when people walked through the streets singing: “The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!” Isis, the mother of Horus, is sometimes pictured with the child Horus in her arms, wearing a crown circled with twelve stars, not too vaguely reminiscent of Christian pictures of Mary.

The Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus is traditionally said to have wept before his crucifixion, was sacred to the god Adonis, whose birthday was celebrated at the Winter Solstice in Jerusalem. Adonis was Astarte’s lover; Astarte was the eastern Mediterranean Venus, or Morning Star. The word “Bethlehem” (the traditional birthplace of Jesus) means “House of Bread”, and Adonis was also god of corn.

Many other gods, too numerous to be named, are reputed to have been born at the Winter Solstice. Nearly every spiritual religion, major and minor, has had at least one god born at the Winter Solstice, when the “old Sun” died and a “new Sun” was reborn.

The first Christians did not celebrate Christmas because they did not believe that Jesus was a god. He was not deified until 325 CE, at which time his birth was celebrated on January 6th. Pope Julius I moved Jesus’ birthday to December 25th in an attempt to assimilate non-Christians and to prevent Christians from participating in the older festivals of the Solar birthday. Pope Leo the Great rebuked Christians for placing more emphasis on the birth of the Sun than on “the one who created the Sun”.

Christians for centuries have accepted December 25th as the birth- day of Jesus on blind faith, although there is no real evidence anywhere to support the claim that he was born on that day. Astronomical evidence indicates that Jesus was not even born in 1 A.D.! Some authorities believe that the entire legend of Jesus’ birth is composed of

legends borrowed from other faiths combined with astrological computations - all of which have been fictionalized and personified by theological writers. Christmas is observed on December 25th because of the shrewd observation of the early Christian fathers that if Christianity were to conquer the world, it would have to relax some of its too-rigid principles and accept at least the old holidays, turning them into Christian festivals with the same meanings.

Should Setians celebrate Christmas? To celebrate it as the birthday of Jesus would be pure hypocrisy for us, who believe the birth of Jesus as god to be mere legend. But there is no reason for us not to celebrate the South (Winter) Solstice. There is no reason for a Setian not to send greeting cards to relatives and friends at this time of year, or to attend the office party, or even to have a "Solstice Tree". In fact not doing these things would set us apart from the rest of our community and make us look suspicious in the eyes of our neighbors.

This particular South Solstice we have something of our own to celebrate. The Æon of Set is six months old. This may make our Temple sound like a mere babe-in-arms in comparison to the other religions of the world, but the announcement of the Æon six months ago has far greater implications for the world than all of them combined. We who are Setians are at last freed to Become.

[2] Conclave Report

Friday evening (Halloween): Those who had arrived by Friday evening were treated to dinner and a reception at our High Priest's home. Wall certificates were presented to those who attended. Those who were not present Friday evening were invited to lunch with the High Priest on Saturday, and received wall certificates at that time.

Saturday afternoon (November 1): The highlight of the discussion period was the presentation of the final papers which make the Temple of Set a non-profit, tax-exempt California religious corporation. The High Priest explained that federal tax-exempt status should now be easily obtained.

Also of note during this session was the choosing by lot of the terms of office of the Council of Nine, which are as follows: Priest Thomas S. Huddleston - 9 years, Priest Ronald K. Barrett - 8 years, Magistra Lilith Sinclair - 7 years, Priest Amn DeCecco - 6 years, Priestess Jinni Bast - 5 years - Magister Michael A. Grumboski - 4 years, Magister Robert Ethel - 3 years, Magister L. Dale Seago - 2 years, and Magistra Margaret Wendall - 1 year. It must be noted that these people do not automatically leave the Council at the end of these terms. They

will be reconsidered at that time. If their continued service on the Council will benefit the Temple of Set, they will serve another nine year term.

Saturday evening (November 1): The Conclave Banquet was held at Squire Richard's Pub in a truly Old English setting, with "wenches" serving table and a minstrel who sang to us.

Saturday evening Ritual (November 1): The Conclave Ritual was held at 11 PM. A specially-made candelabra, with a candle representing each degree of membership in the Temple of Set, was lit. Those members of the Council of Nine who attended were presented with insignia of office (*Tcham* scepters handcrafted by Priest Murray). The highlight, however, was the presentation to the High Priest of a sword, the Double Crown, and a crook and flail.

Sunday morning (November 2): Breakfast at Squire Richard's Pub at what must be one of the minor disasters of Santa Barbara history! Each person ordered something different, and a fuse blew, throwing the toaster, the coffee maker (and probably the cook) out of order for awhile. All felt the waitresses could have charged us an "entertainment tax" for the way they kept their composure and even joked with us about the breakdown "we" had caused.

Much important business was accomplished; Setians who had been corresponding with each other for a long time had a chance to meet face-to-face. New friendships were formed, and all who attended left with a feeling that the Temple of Set is truly a Brotherhood.

Thanks are due first to Magistra Sinclair, who coordinated the conclave; to the High Priest, who so graciously opened his home to us; to Priest Murray for the rite observed and long hours making the candelabra, pentagram and insignia; to the motel personnel who made the stay pleasant; and to the staff of Squire Richard's who made our meals together most enjoyable.

[3] A neb kekui Set! Ami pert em kher!

- by Amn DeCecco III°

"Hail, Prince of Darkness, Set! Who cometh forth by night!" - *Egyptian Book of the Dead*

There exists within the Temple of Set a Council of Rites, dedicated to the premise that ritual and ceremony "have been a boon to the personal, psychological, growth-through-awareness phenomenon throughout the ages of man".

"The product of the Council of Rites will vary, from historically-oriented ritual to modern tribute to that portion of the ancient cosmos called Set. Rites that will do honor to some, dishonor to others." - 10/4/X letter in *Cavernus*

The Council of Rites is at the very beginning of ritual in the Temple of Set. All suggestions, ritualistic texts, and critique will be considered. Whereas we are at the birth of this endeavor, a main thesis or pattern cannot realistically be put forth until we have experimented with all facets of ceremony.

So here we stand at the opening of the pylon gate and the phrases at the beginning of this article. An invocation is being worked on at this time.

If you would like to help, send your suggestions and/or ritual texts to Priest Amn DeCecco in Framingham, Massachusetts.

[4] **Set and the Creation of the Universe**

- by Robert Ethel IV°

[Originally published in *Voice of the Dragon* #I-4, 10/10/75]

In 1931 Carl Anderson, an American physicist, discovered the existence of positively-charged electrons. Until this time electrons had been known only as negatively-charged "particles" [the purpose of the quotation marks will become clear later] in orbit around a nucleus in an atom. Anderson was studying cosmic-ray electrons passing through a strong magnetic field, and noticed that while one-half of the electrons were bent as would be expected according to their charge, the other half were bent in an exactly opposite direction, indicating an opposite charge. These positively charged electrons became known as "positrons" (sort of anti-electrons).

This shed some light on Dirac's "hole" theory in that these positrons were later shown to behave in the same manner as the "holes" postulated by Dirac. Later experiments showed that positrons could be produced by bombarding metal plates with gamma rays. Simply, a gamma ray striking the nucleus of an atom has all of its energy converted into electrons (e-) and positrons (e+). Both of these particles are cast off from the atom to be eliminated by other atoms. The electrons collide with other electrons and eventually find homes in other atomic structures. The positrons collide with other electrons to produce gamma rays. One positron colliding with one electron produces two gamma rays proceeding in opposite directions from one another. Considering the density of electrons surrounding us, it is easy to see that positrons are annihilated or converted almost instantaneously.

In October 1965 Emilio Segre discovered negatively-charged protons, and later negative or anti-neutrons. It has since been determined that all of the recently discovered particles have their opposites or anti's.

Now, since anti-particles have been proven to exist, what about our Universe? First let us look at

the "creation" of the Universe in terms of "Genesis II" from the *Cloven Hoof* #IV-7. We will briefly restate the theory to serve as a point of reference:

In the "beginning" the Universe was filled with radiation. This radiation became partially transformed into equal amounts of matter and antimatter. The particles thus formed began to draw toward each other, and toward a center. During this process, particles of matter met other particles of matter and fused yielding larger bodies of matter. The same occurred with the antimatter. Matter met antimatter in some cases, and both were "annihilated" forming radiation. Eventually, the radiation pressure became greater than the force of attraction between the particles and bodies proceeding toward the common center, and caused them to retreat from each other. The "body" formed by the proximity of the particles attracted to each other is basically what George Gamow termed an "ylem" in his "big bang" theory of universal expansion.

But is the Universe made up of both matter and antimatter? We do not know, and, to date, there does not appear to be any way to prove it. We know that our solar system is composed entirely of matter; equally, we are fairly certain that our entire galaxy is composed only of matter [if this were not the case, we would detect intense gamma radiation from all parts of the galaxy - even considering the distances between atoms in inter-galactic space]. Considering that there is more evidence to support the existence of proportional amounts of matter and antimatter in the Universe, we shall adopt this for use in our theories.

In the beginning was the radiation, and the energy was without mass. And the energy came together to form matter and antimatter.

$$[0=+1-1]$$

By way of explanation let us bring up the "law of the conservation of mass & energy" developed from the "law of the conservation of mass" and the "law of the conservation of energy." Briefly it states that mass and energy can never be created or destroyed, but they can be converted from one to the other. Utilizing this Law we get:

$$E=m+a$$

where E = energy - in terms of mass, 0; m = matter or +1; and a = antimatter or -1. Hence:

$$0=+1-1$$

=The creation of the Universe from "nothing".

In 1906 Albert Einstein developed his theory of the relationship between mass and energy:

$$E = mc^2$$

where E = energy, m = mass, and c = velocity of light. Stated briefly, any appearance of energy is necessarily accompanied by the disappearance of a small amount of mass.

A French physicist named Louis de Broglie suggested that electrons were not particles but rather waves. This fouled up the entire system of thinking that had considered electrons to be little hard spheres.

Later a Viennese physicist named Schrodinger developed de Broglie's idea into a system termed "wave mechanics". This system explained quantum phenomena by attributing the functions of waves to protons and electrons. [What is quantum? I hear you cry. Quantum theory is the theory that energy does not flow smoothly in arbitrarily small amounts from the radiating body, but flows in the form of particles or quanta. Quantum is the singular of quanta.]

Thus electrons became viewed as undulating charges of electrical energy, and atoms as systems of waves. This tends to simplify and explain the "law of the conservation of mass and energy" as stated earlier.

Now you are probably wondering where Set comes into all of this.

In the beginning was Set, and Set was without form. He came together in creation to give rise to HarWer, that Set might define himself.

Set is the ageless intelligence - a form of energy. In the beginning Set equaled 0, nothing in terms of mass. In creation he united with himself to give rise to mass and anti-mass - matter and antimatter (HarWer).

Set continues in the form of energy while he continues in the form of mass, and he continually converts from one to the other [see the "law of the conservation of mass and energy" and $E=mc^2$]. Hence, with the creation of the Universe came the definition of Set (potentially), and this creation was from Set whose existence was as nothing.

I am the Ageless Intelligence of the Universe. I created HarWer that I might define my Self.

But HarWer, my opposite Self, is a strange and fitful presence. I, Set am my Self distinct from the order of the cosmos, yet am ordered in and of my Self. HarWer I was when I was once part of the cosmos and could achieve identity only by becoming what the cosmic order was not. By HarWer I cancelled the imbalance,

leaving a void in which true creation could take form as Set. - *Book of Coming Forth by Night*

The first part of the above quote is explained in the preceding paragraph. The second part is, however, a bit confusing. Set states that he is distinct from the order of the cosmos. This appears to contradict what we have stated earlier (i.e. that Set continues in the form of energy while he continues in the form of mass).

Before we get involved in this, let us start at the beginning of the second part of the quote: "But HarWer, my Opposite Self, is a strange and fitful presence." Set, in the form of energy, gave rise to HarWer (matter/antimatter). HarWer's purpose was [and is] to define Set, and this is accomplished by the use of opposites [i.e. day has no meaning without the existence of night]. When Set is energy, HarWer is matter/antimatter, and vice versa.

The Universe is basically ordered, but there are certain things that disrupt this order [we will not even consider mankind!]. The existence of antimatter (anti-particles) in a system composed entirely of matter is one such disruption. Hence HarWer as a "strange and fitful presence".

"I, Set, am my Self distinct from the order of the cosmos, yet am ordered in and of my Self." Contradiction of our above statements? No! By means of explanation let us define "order". According to Funk and Wagnall's *Standard Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "order" is defined as "a condition in which there is a methodical, proper, or harmonious arrangement of things". We shall discount "methodical" and "proper" and concern ourselves with "harmonious".

The same source defines "harmonious" as "made up of sounds, colors, or other elements that combine agreeably ..." The key word here is "agreeably". When matter and antimatter collide, they produce an explosion, which we hardly find agreeable if we do not plan it.

Remember we are concerned with Set and the creation of the Universe; the "creation" of matter [and antimatter], and - since we are matter [most of us are anyway] - we are ergo concerned with ourselves.

Since Set has communicated with us [through the *Book of Coming Forth by Night*], he is concerned with us. Therefore our opinions count, and if we consider something disagreeable, it is disagreeable. Set as an Intelligence is obviously able to think, in which case he must consider some things disagreeable. Hence Set is "distinct from the Order of the Cosmos" as man is distinct from the order of the cosmos [we do many things which are against logic and order].

Set is “ordered in and of himself” as man is ordered in and of himself. Any “Intelligence” is in a sense un-orderly in that the intelligence gives it the ability to defy the order.

“HarWer I was when I was once part of the Cosmos ...” When Set was totally of the cosmos [”Cosmos” is defined, again by Funk and Wagnall’s, as “the world or universe considered as an **orderly** system” (emphasis mine)]. I.e. when Set was pre-intelligence, he was merely radiation which was partially converted to matter/antimatter (HarWer) according to the above stated “law of the conservation of mass and energy”. Set was HarWer (and Set) in the “beginning”.

“... and could achieve identity by becoming what the cosmic order was not.” The cosmic order was radiation. To achieve identity [by utilizing HarWer] Set had to become matter/antimatter (HarWer) which the cosmic order at the time was not.

“By HarWer I cancelled the imbalance, leaving a void in which true creation could take form as Set.” By becoming HarWer, Set cancelled the imbalance by becoming mass, along with energy. [Back to the “law”.] This left a “void” in the sense that “void” is defined as “a breach of surface or matter” [again Funk and Wagnall’s]. The conversion of matter to energy leaves a “void”. Similarly the conversion of energy to matter leaves a “void”. [Sounds a little like Dirac’s “hole” theory.]

By creating this “void” in such a manner, the way is established in which “true creation” can “take form as Set”. We are now back at the beginning and the creation of the Universe.

Xepert! Behold: Everything is Set, and Set is everything!

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